

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01
DHA-02 AID-05 PC-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 /092 W
-----201803Z 028639 /43

O 201642Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5986
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0605

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR SF WA UN
SUBJ: SWAPO RAID INTO OVAMBO

1. FONMIN BOTHA CALLED MY BRITISH AND FRENCH COLLEAGUES
AND ME TO HIS OFFICE AT 5 P.M. TODAY TO INFORM US OF AN
INCIDENT INVOLVING SWAPO IN OVAMBO AREA THIS MORNING.
DFA SECRETARY BRAND FOURIE WAS ALSO PRESENT. BOTHA SAID
THAT AROUND 1 OR 2 A.M. TODAY A GROUP OF SWAPO TERRORISTS
NUMBERING ABOUT 30 AND ARMED WITH "FN-TYPE" WEAPONS
ENTERED THE ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION STATION AT ENAMULENGE
AND KIDNAPPED THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE: 3 WHITE ROMAN CATHOLIC
PRIESTS, 2 BLACK TEACHERS, ONE BLACK CHIEF, 51 BLACK
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HIGH SCHOOL BOYS, 40 BLACK HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS AND 29
VERY YOUNG PRIMARY SCHOOL GIRLS. THEY CUT THE TELEPHONE
WIRES AND MADE OFF WITH ONE 5-TON BEDFORD TRUCK AND A
PICK-UP TRUCK. BOTHA DESCRIBED THE MISSION STATION AS
NOT FAR FROM THE TOWN OF OMBULANTU WHICH IS LOCATED
SOUTHEAST OF THE RUACANA FALLS AND NOT LESS THAN 15 MILES
FROM THE BORDER.

2. CONTINUING WITH HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENT, BOTHA SAID THAT ONE OF THE PRIESTS MANAGED TO ESCAPE AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT AND REPORTED TO THE POLICE. SECURITY PERSONNEL IMMEDIATELY TOOK UP THE CHASE AND SUCCEEDED IN OVERTAKING THE PICK-UP TRUCK JUST INSIDE THE SWA BORDER. IN THIS ACTION THEY RESCUED THE TWO REMAINING WHITE PRIESTS AND TWO OF THE CHILDREN. AS FAR AS BOTHA KNEW NONE OF THE KIDNAPPERS WERE CAPTURED OR KILLED.

3. BOTHA SAID THAT THE SECURITY FORCES ARE ON THE TRAIL OF THE KIDNAPPERS. HE AFFIRMED THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION ABOUT THE FACTS, ADDING THAT "IT IS POSSIBLE WE MAY HAVE TO CROSS THE BORDER TO FREE THE CHILDREN--THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES." HE WENT ON TO NOTE THAT THIS TYPE OF THING HAPPENS EVERY TIME THAT A PEACEFUL MOVE IS UNDERWAY. "THIS IS THE TYPE OF PEOPLE," HE ADDED, "WITH WHOM WE MUST DEAL. IT IS A SENSELESS THING, ABSOLUTELY SENSELESS." AT THIS POINT BRAND FOURIE ENTERED THE CONVERSATION TO NOTE THE BAD PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT THAT THIS INCIDENT WILL HAVE ON THE TURNHALLE. SWAPO HAS DONE THIS, HE SAID, ON THE EVE OF THE 5-POWER TALKS AND THIS WILL CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE THAT WILL MAKE IT MUCH HARDER TO GET ANYTHING OUT OF THE TURNHALLE ON SWAPO. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION HE REPEATED THIS POINT.

4. BOTHA CONCLUDED THE BRIEFING BY SAYING THAT HE WANTED OUR GOVERNMENTS TO GET THE FACTS, SUCH AS ARE KNOWN AT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESENT TIME, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE FROM THE SAG BEFORE THEY LEARNED OF THE INCIDENT THROUGH OTHER MEANS. HE SAID THAT HE WAS IN TOUCH WITH THE SECURITY FORCES AND WILL KEEP US INFORMED.

5. REFERRING TO HIS EARLIER STATEMENT ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SAG FORCES CROSSING THE BORDER TO RESCUE THE CHILDREN, I ASKED WHETHER THE PURSUERS HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED TO CROSS THE BORDER AND WERE ALREADY ON THE ANGOLAN SIDE. BOTHA SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES HAD ACTUALLY CROSSED THE BORDER BUT THAT THE POSSIBILITY EXISTED AND HE WANTED US TO KNOW THIS. I THEN ASKED WHETHER SAG OFFICIALS AT RUACANA HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ANGOLAN AUTHORITIES TO ENLIST THEIR SUPPORT IN GETTING THE CHILDREN BACK. BOTHA SAID HE DID NOT KNOW; HAD NOT THOUGHT OF

THIS BUT CONSIDERED IT A GOOD IDEA AND WOULD CONSULT THE PRIME MINISTER.

6. WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THE INCIDENT.
AT THIS STAGE I HESITATE TO COMMENT ON THE IMPLICATIONS
BUT IT COULD BE USED TO BUTTRESS A HARD LINE ON FUTURE
CONTACTS WITH SWAPO.BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING, ALLEGATIONS, INVASIONS, MISSIONARIES, STUDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAPET00605
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770137-0518
Format: TEL
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770439/aaaabhsc.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: 23972aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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SAS ID: 2753010
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Subject: SWAPO RAID INTO OVAMBO
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SF, WA, AO, UN, SWAPO
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